

Critical Intersections: the 12th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning, University of Wollongong 25-27th November 2015

Critical intersections in ALL in VET Forum

Abstract

A sound knowledge of learning skills and presence of relevant support for academic skills, are important for students to succeed in their studies. This forum will discuss issues related to critical intersections in academic language and learning support in Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions and courses. A group of five ALL practitioners from a range of different VET contexts will pose a series of issues or dilemmas, and then facilitate a discussion with participants on these and other issues. Some of the key topics for discussion will include:

- Connecting student transition from VET to higher education (HE) first year retention and successful progression
- Preparation for HE courses in VET sector: TAFE, RTO, Adult Education Centres
- 'Academic language and learning' vs 'Foundation skills' – are they in competition, or are they the same?
- Managing/structuring/delivering ALL for VET and university level students in dual-sector institutions
- Entry requirements/testing for VET courses
- ... and anything the participants bring along for discussion.

This forum could be the starting point for further discussion or collaborative action, and we will also garner interest in the establishment of a VET special interest group within AALL.

Target audience

The forum is targeted for delegates practising ALL in Vocational Education and Training (VET) contexts (TAFE, RTO, ACE and dual-sector institutions) and all those interested in sharing practice and discussing issues, challenges and opportunities of ALL in VET.

Participants are encouraged to join the discussion: bring questions, issues and challenges, and share examples of best practice.

Format

A group of five ALL practitioners from a range of different VET contexts will pose a series of issues or dilemmas, and then facilitate a discussion with participants on these and other issues.

Critical intersections in ALL in VET

a discussion forum

Your Facilitators

- Lesley Cioccarelli, Canberra Institute of Technology
 - Ellen Cooper, Navitas Professional Institute
 - Joanne Fuller, TAFE Illawarra, Wollongong
 - Dr Elena Verezub, Swinburne University of Technology
 - Sarah Watterson, Adult Ed Community College
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Forum outline

1. Each of the facilitators will present an issue
 2. Open discussion
 3. Wrap-up & “Where to from here?”
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Foundation skills vs Academic skills

‘academic language and learning’ vs ‘foundation skills’ support – are they in competition, or are they the same?

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Are FS adequate for students in higher level courses?

VET qualifications AQF Levels 1-6

... FSK - AQF Levels 1 & 2:

- Level 1 – Certificate I
- Level 2 – Certificate II
- Level 3 – Certificate III
- Level 4 – Certificate IV
- Level 5 – Diploma
- Level 6 – Advanced Diploma, Associate Degree
- Level 7 – Bachelor Degree
- Level 8 – Bachelor Honours Degree, Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma
- Level 9 – Masters Degree
- Level 10 – Doctoral Degree

Certificate I in Access to Vocational Pathways
Certificate I in Skills for Vocational Pathways
Certificate II in Skills for Work and Voc Pathways

How are ALL / FS funded in VET?

- centrally funded ALL?
 - dual-sector (same for Uni & VET students?)
 - State/Territory 'Skills' programs
 - funded support for FS (and ESL) programs
 - students have to enrol/be enrolled in FS
 - ... and pay?
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Is there any ALL out there?

- Need for ALL support increasing

but...

- Decreasing % of provision of VET in TAFE
 - 5000 RTOs !
- Decreasing budgets for ALL-type services

and...

- ‘embedded’ can mean ‘buried’
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Entry requirements & testing

Entry requirements/testing for VET courses

Ellen Cooper

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The ACSF Writing Indicators: Communicative Competence

Example: Skill check of writing			
Task	ACSF level	Indicator	Correct
Incident report	1	Completes personal details correctly	✓
		Description of incident: simple structure	
		1-2 simple sentences	
		Attempts punctuation; may be inconsistent	
		Approximates spelling	✓
		Vocabulary limited to basic words	✓
	2	Completes entire form with reasonable accuracy	✓
		Description of incident: factual and relevant	
		Writes several sentences (1 paragraph)	
		Basic punctuation (full stop, capital letters)	
		Some spelling mistakes but overall meaning clear	
		Vocabulary sufficient to relay meaning; not extensive	
	3	Completes entire form accurately	
		Description of incident: detailed and comprehensive	
		Uses paragraphs or substantial amount of text	
		Punctuation used to assist understanding (commas, apostrophes, quotation marks, etc.)	
		Spelling is consistent and reasonably accurate	
		Vocabulary specific and relevant to task and setting	



Critical questions:

- Why identify a learner's skill level prior to a course?
 - What is the most suitable way for any training organisation to identify a learner's core skill levels prior to their course? What is the best way to do this through our pre-training processes? What is the best way to do this in higher education? Could there be a common language around this?
 - How should the learner be positioned in relation to an early skill level tool?
 - Is there a difference between using early tools for pre-entry requirements (in absence of other 'qualifications') and using diagnostic tools for informing learning and teaching?
 - Could higher education be talking about meeting 'communicative competence' as a basic pre-requisite for assessment tasks?
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Critical questions

What are the pros and cons of using the FSAT (Foundation Skills Assessment Tool)?

The difference between using early tools for pre-entry requirements (in absence of other 'qualifications') and using diagnostic tools for informing learning and teaching?

Supporting student transition

Connecting student transition from VET to higher education (HE) first year retention and successful progression

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Critical Questions

How can diverse student needs be met by transition/outreach programs?

Do transition/outreach programs impact significantly on first year retention/ successful progression?



Challenges

- early identification of often complex student needs
- constraints of time and resources to manage the complexity
- multiple pathways from VET to higher education
- student expectations
- keeping abreast of changes in technology
- tracking and reporting on progress



Opportunities

- many options are available and should continue to be developed
- focus on ‘just in time’ and ‘key milestones’
- key staff working holistically with students
- full utilisation of technology

ALL in Dual-Sector Institutions

Managing/structuring/delivering ALL for VET and university level students in dual-sector institutions

Dr Elena Verezub

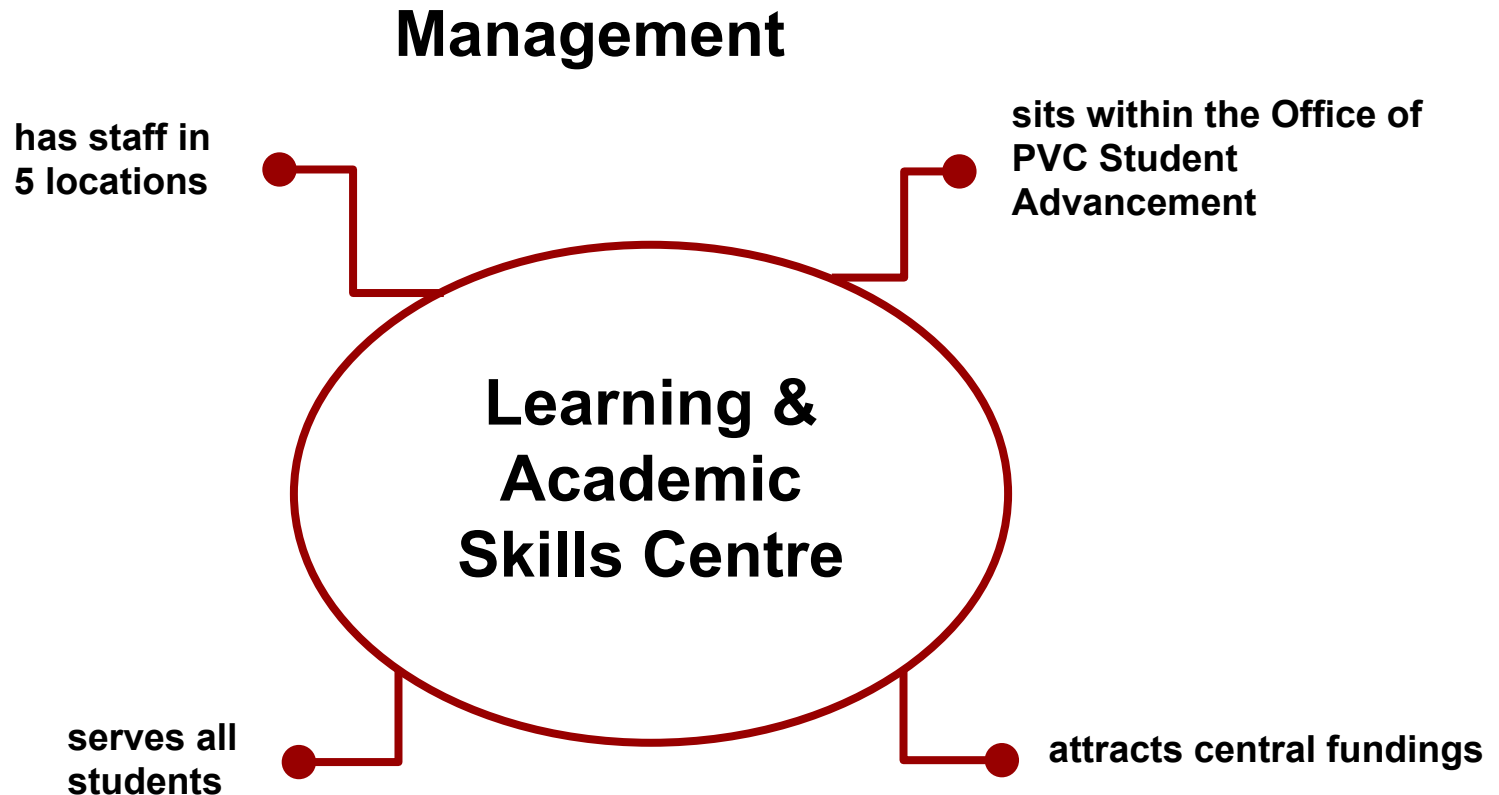
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ALL in Dual-Sector Institutions (cont.)



ALL in Dual-Sector Institutions (cont.)

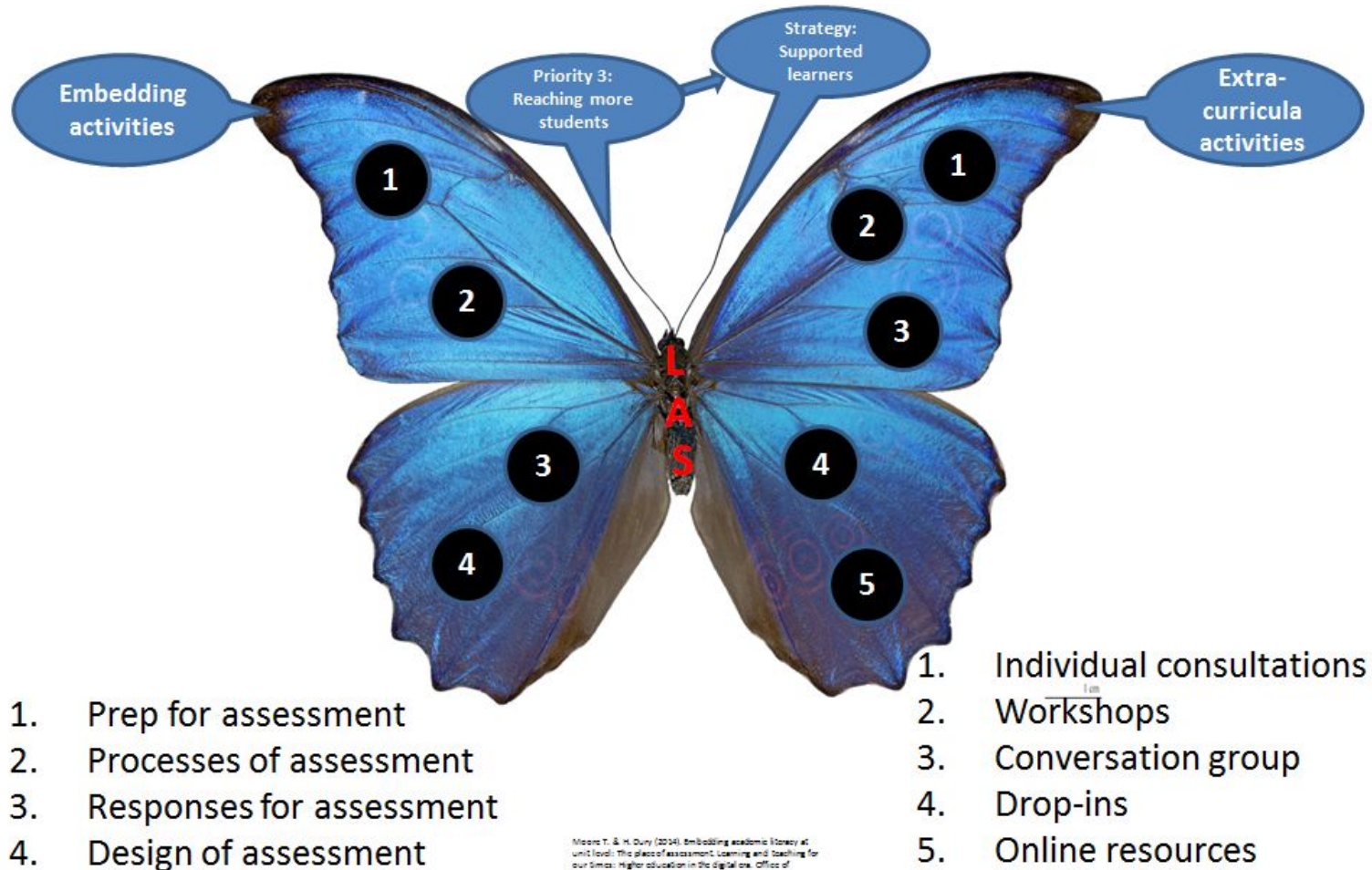
Structure

Portfolios:

1. HEd undergraduate and coursework Masters
 2. Pathways and Vocational Education (PAVE)
 3. HDR students
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ALL in Dual-Sector Institutions (cont.)

LAS academic development priorities



Questions for Discussion

1. How do we evaluate academic language and learning work within Vocation Education to prove its impact?
 2. What do the Universities/VE providers do to address the needs of students with low level of the English language proficiency, who study in the mainstream courses?
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Preparation for Uni courses

*Preparation for university courses in VET sector: TAFE,
RTO, Adult Education Centres*

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VET to Higher Education Transitions

- Transition from VET to Higher Education is more likely to occur from higher level qualifications
- Our student demographic tends to be disadvantaged learners with a tendency to enrol in lower level VET qualifications
- Transition to higher education can be complicated, therefore student support make a valuable contribution to student success

Student Support Factors

- Disadvantaged learners benefit from a scaled delivery (Cert III, Cert IV, Bridging Program, Uni)
- Student support officers (LLN)
- VET Contextualisation
- Fair Assessment and Reasonable Adjustment (assessment can be modified as long as the integrity of the unit remains)

Open Discussion

- Q & A
- YOUR critical intersections:
 - issues, dilemmas, questions, answers, suggestions, ...

Critical Intersections in ALL in VET

Discussion questions

1. 'Academic language and learning' vs 'Foundation skills' – are they in competition, or are they the same?
2. Are *Foundation Skills* adequate for students in higher level courses?
3. How are ALL / *Foundation Skills* funded in VET?
4. With 5000 RTOs delivering VET, is there adequate support for learners?
5. Why identify a learner's core skill levels prior to their course?
6. What is the most suitable way for any training organisation to identify a learner's core skill levels prior to their course? What is the best way to do this through our pre-training processes?
7. How should the learner be positioned in relation to an early skill level tool?
8. What are the pros and cons of using the FSAT (Foundation Skills Assessment Tool)?
9. The difference between using early tools for pre-entry requirements (in absence of other 'qualifications') and using diagnostic tools for informing learning and teaching?
10. How can diverse student needs be met by transition/outreach programs?
11. Do transition/outreach programs impact significantly on first year retention/ successful progression?
12. How do we evaluate academic language and learning work within Vocation Education to prove its impact?
13. What do the Universities/VE providers do to address the needs of students with low level of the English language proficiency, who study in the mainstream courses?
14. How do we attend to the costs involved in addressing a learner's core skills levels prior to undertaking their chosen vocational training program if a skills gap has been identified?

Wrap-up

Where to from here?
